

2019-2020 Serve Wisconsin AmeriCorps Formula RFP Questions and Answers

Serve Wisconsin is collecting questions that are received in writing to servewisconsin@wisconsin.gov regarding the AmeriCorps Formula RFP. Redacted questions and answers are posted here for your reference.

Questions must be received in writing by April 30, 2019. This document will be updated periodically and posted on <https://servewisconsin.wi.gov/Pages/Grants/AmeriCorpsRFP.aspx>

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A. Questions Raised During the Current Competition

A1. Exploring the option to do a program with 10+ members: the chart in section 1.2.4 in the RFP shows that there's a No Cost Slot option that new programs can apply for. In section 1.5.1 (types of grants), it says 'except for EAP and Professional Corps, fixed amount grants are only available for recompeting programs.'

Essentially, can we (a new program) apply for a No Cost Slot program? If so, does that require a match, or any additional cost on our part?

Serve Wisconsin has not had any prior application for no cost slots, so we don't have any experience with those. I took a look at the CNCS NOFO on which Serve Wisconsin's RFP is based and it appears that based on the table in the Type of Award section of the RFP answers "Yes" to whether No Cost Slots are an available option for new applicants.

The No Cost Slots option would provide AmeriCorps member slots with education awards, but no grant funding; therefore, there would be no match requirement, but the application would have to provide information (as described in the RFP/Application Instructions for fixed amount and No Cost options) about other resources being used to successfully carry out the proposed program.

A2. Section 2.3.3.E seems to contradict itself. Would you be able to clarify?

The beginning of section 2.3.3.E is copied below.

E. Evaluation Plan (Required for recompeting grantees - 0 points)

There are no evaluation plan requirements for applicants that are not competing for the first time, and applicants should simply enter "NA".

If the applicant is competing for the first time, please provide a data collection plan in the "Evaluation Plan" field...

The "Required for recompeting grantees" text should be removed because there requirements apply to applicant competing for the first time, as described later in the body of the section. Therefore, the section should have looked like this:

E. Evaluation Plan (0 points)

There are no evaluation plan requirements for applicants that are not competing for the first time, and applicants should simply enter "NA".

If the applicant is competing for the first time, please provide a data collection plan in the “Evaluation Plan” field...

For your convenience, the difference between the original and modified section is highlighted in grey.

B. Questions Raised During Previous Competitions

B1. Can you apply if you are receiving AmeriCorps funds through a National Direct application?

Yes, an organization that currently receives AmeriCorps members through a National Direct program may apply for their own AmeriCorps program through Serve Wisconsin.

B2. Is there a minimum number of Member Service Years (MSY) that we can request?

No, Serve Wisconsin prefers to make awards to organizations engaging 20 or more *members*, but there is no minimum number of MSY that you can request.

B3. Are grantees able to pay stipends under this grant? If so, what slots are able to receive stipends?

Yes, programs may pay a living allowance to members in any slot type, and must provide a living allowance to full-time members. Review the RFP for information about the minimum and maximum amounts for the living allowances.

B4. Will we be held to the number of members our program plans as noted on the Notice of Intent to Apply form? If we submit for 10-20, but realize after we want to bump up to 10-20, would that change be allowable in our grant application?

The Notice of Intent to Apply does not obligate you to anything. It is simply a mandatory step for applicants.

B5. How do we know if we need to submit a cost allocation plan?

No organization is required to submit a cost allocation plan. The RFP says “States, local governments, and Indian Tribes may use approved cost allocation plans.”

B6. If we choose one performance measure, do all AmeriCorps members have to work towards and report on that one performance measure? If we choose to have two performance measures that have different outputs but lead to the same outcome, do all AmeriCorps members have to work towards and report on both measures?

Please see Appendix A in the Performance Measure Instructions for how MSY and members are to be allocated to measures. Programs are not required to measure all of their activities in performance measures, so the number of members and MSY do not have to total the amount of your request.

If you have two performance measures, members’ activities may relate to more than one measure, in which case you would indicate that in the performance measure following the instructions that are referenced above.

B7. In Additional Checklist B, under member costs, there’s a box that says, “Is the Worker’s Compensation calculated correctly? If you are a state or local government applicant and are self-insured for Worker’s Compensation purposes, has the appropriate statement been entered?” We are in the process of receiving a quote about what the Worker’s Compensation for members would be. Is it preferred that this quote be submitted with our grant application’s additional paperwork?

A Worker’s Compensation quote would not be required and likely would not be reviewed. Section 2.1.4 states, “Do not submit any supplementary materials that are not requested, such as videos, pictures, brochures, etc. The Board will not review or return them.”

C. General Application Questions

C1. Do I register for an individual or system account on SAM?

You should register for an individual account. Follow the directions in the SAM User Guide:

https://www.sam.gov/sam/SAM_Guide/SAM_User_Guide.htm

C2. I work in a school and had to undergo a background check. Do I still need [National Service Criminal History Checks]?

Yes, if your personnel expenses will be funded with grant funds (meaning, CNCS share OR Grantee share), you must complete the two or three point National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) prior to charging any time to the grant. You should include the costs of a FBI fingerprint check and State of Wisconsin background check in your budget. See more in the RFP.

C3. If CNCS funds are used only by my organization but member agencies contribute matching funds to cover their local agency's involvement, do we need to budget for criminal background checks for all staff involved, or just our organization's?

Individuals who are required to have multi-component National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC) run on them are those who work or serve in a covered position. A covered position is those who are funded, partially or wholly, by federal funds or shown as match (in-kind or cash) on the grant. So, for example, if you have organization staff who will be charging in-kind time to the grant, a NSCHC is required. If, however, that individuals will be involved in discussions and working on the program but not charging any of their time as federal or match, then a NSCHC is not required.

C4. Where do I get an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement?

If your organization has applied for and has been approved for an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, your financial office should have that documentation. We cannot tell you if you have one or not.

C5. Do I use my name or my superintendent's name when applying?

The authorized representative for your organization must be the one who submits any application to the Board.

C6. What is an organizational chart?

It is a chart that shows the staffing structure of your organization.

C7. If we hire a consultant, do I need to factor in their mileage in the budget?

This is entirely up to you.

C8. Can someone review my proposal prior to submission?

No one associated with the Board can review any part of the application or provide any feedback prior to submission. You will need to find someone you know or work with to complete a review.

C9. Who should sign the Assurances and Certifications?

The Authorized Representative for the organization needs to be the one to review and sign the Assurances and Certifications and submit the application in eGrants.